

MOAI SIGHTINGS

IN OUR VOLUME 17(1) ISSUE of *Rapa Nui Journal* (May 2003), we noted that tissue cases in the shape of a *moai* head were on sale from Ebay; one pulls a tissue from its nose. Since then, these "Tiki Head Tissue Box Covers" have appeared in catalogs all over the country, advertised as a "delightfully heady presence". We now have received dozens of these advertisements (please, folks, no more....).

MEANWHILE, RAPANUIPHILE, Bob Chisnell wrote a letter of protest to a magazine that was advertising them: Sirs: I have just received the latest issue (New Year 2004) of *ACORN* magazine, and I am writing to protest the listing of an obscene and offensive article among the goods your establishment hawks. On page 19, item F offers what is called a **STONE STATUE TISSUE BOX COVER**. The item is a grossly portrayed image, and so identified, of what purports to be an Easter Island statue, or Moai, with a tissue protruding from its nose. Who is the halfwit who conceived such an insulting piece of trash? Has he been to that magnificently historic island to see the wonders, to experience the awe, to sense the culture, to come to know and love the Rapa Nui people, to move about on the most remote piece of inhabited land on Earth? You and your publication should feel a deep shame and offer an abject apology to the world and especially to everything connected with Rapa Nui for your money-grubbing stupidity for the sake of a few pieces of silver.

Robert E. Chisnell (Associate Professor, Ret.)

Wow, go get 'em, Bob.

A SET OF SIX STAMPS issued by the Royal Mail of Britain has made news. The stamps feature objects from the British Museum, which recently noted its 250th year anniversary. Chosen for one of the images on the stamps is the *moai*, Hoa Hakananai'a, which was taken from the island in 1868.



PERFUME NOW COMES in *moai*-shaped bottles. H. de Briassar, Paris, is marketing "O'PSIE" *eau de parfum* (two scents: one for women, one for men; both expensive). The bottle cap serves for a rather narrow *pukao*. www.briassar.com/

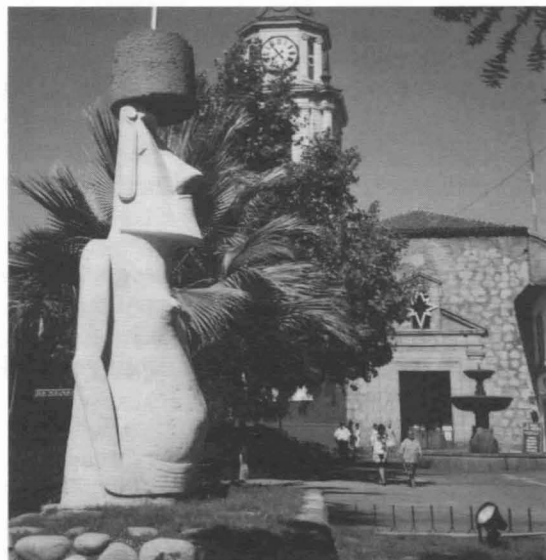
WHILE WE THOUGHT the tissue box covers were the worst, along comes "Easter Island Bobble Head". The advertisement in a catalog, sent to us by both Betsy Hamel and Marcia Opal, describes the 7 1/2 inch head as, "A single tap sends this spring-loaded scale model of a 10 ton *moai* bopping up and down. No scholar's desk should be without one."



This "moai sighting" was sent in by Avonne Bradshaw of Phoenix, and rather leaves us speechless. In that light, we ask our readers to supply an appropriate caption. A prize goes to the best one! Send to ngarona@att.net



THIS DOUBLE-HEADER *MOAI* SIGHTING was sent to us by Mark Bright of Santa Barbara. He spotted the two-*moai* logo at a business in California, called Epik Masonry and Concrete. Their logo consists of double *moai* heads and their motto is "Our Reputation is Set in Stone!" Thanks, Mark!



ON JANUARY 16th, A MOAI WAS UNVEILED in front of the hotel San Francisco, right next to the San Francisco church on the Alameda, Santiago de Chile. The statue is the brainchild of Edgard Hereveri, the owner of the Vai Moana cabins on Easter Island. The statue dedication was accompanied by an exhibition of Rapanui art inside the hotel. The marble *moai* was carved by Bene Tuki Pate. News and Photo by Riet Delsing.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE PACIFIC

MICRONESIA

OIL SLICKS FROM WW2 WRECKS are polluting sensitive lagoons and reefs from the Solomons to Micronesia. More than 3,852 Japanese and US warships, including 23 aircraft carriers, 213 destroyers, 22 battleships and some 50 oil tankers have been mapped by Pacific nations. The wrecks are corroding and causing major oil leaks. Few island nations have equipment to clean up marine oil spills and requests to the US and Japan to take responsibility for them have gone unanswered. Reefs in the Solomons are dying from oil pollution. Both the US and Japan also left great quantities of bombs, fuel and weapon dumps on land; neither is willing to remove them.

John Vidal, from the Guardian Weekly, Feb 12-18, 2004

FIJI

TWO LEADING SCIENTISTS FROM the University of the South Pacific attended a meeting in Brussels in August to restore the reputation of kava products. A ban on kava imports from Pacific Island countries into Asia and Europe has severely affected many island communities. It seems that excessive organic resinous compounds were found in kava sold in Europe and this may be the source for reported liver problems.

USP Beat, Vol. 3(12) 2003.

A NEW DEGREE PROGRAM, Bachelor of Arts in Tourism and Hospitality, will be offered from 2004 at the University's Laucala Campus in Suva. The European Union awarded the University a grant of FJ\$2.37 million last year to create the new degree program. The first stage was to establish a lecturer position, with the appointment of David Short. The grant also provides further support to Tourism and Hospitality through funding for postgraduate scholarships and money for enriching the department's research resources.

USP Beat, Vol. 3(17) 2003

NABUTAUTAU, FIJI. The relatives of English missionary Thomas Baker, who was murdered and eaten in this remote village 137 years ago, joined 600 people for a Christian ceremony that locals hope will lift a curse that has lingered since the killing. Ten descendants of Baker were joined by Fijian Prime Minister Laisenia Qarase, all of whom made the difficult trek to attend the service. Villagers believe that a traditional Fijian apology will absolve them of the crime of their ancestors.

In 1867 Baker and eight of his Fijian followers were clubbed to death and eaten. Since then, the fortunes of Nabutautau's 200 residents have suffered. Today the village has no school, no medical facilities and no roads -- difficulties the villagers think are linked to their ancestors' cannibal past. The family of Baker did not believe the village was cursed, but because the villagers did, the family came to help them. The apology ceremony began shortly after daybreak with traditional kava drinking rituals, held in a circle of tents erected on a space of cleared land in the middle of the village. It culminated in the "symbolic cutting of the chain of curse and bondage" by the Baker family's release of balloons. The family

received a ceremonial *tabau*, or whale's tooth, and a descendant, Baker's great-great-grandson, Australian Geoff Lester, speaking for the family, told the chiefs: "I look forward to this event being of use to the Fiji people and the people of this village". While he did not believe in curses, Lester said "it's a concept of this village, so it's important to them so I'm happy to help with this". He said his great-great grandfather "came here knowing what the risks were and fully aware of what might happen". Baker's children all moved from Fiji to Australia after his death, and the male line of the family has died out.

In a message to the village, Prime Minister Qarase, said "asking forgiveness from the relatives of Thomas Baker and members of his party is a very beautiful act". However, no mention was made of any government funding for the impoverished village. Since the killing, some locals say they have been cursed more by fellow Fijians than by any other-worldly power. The village elder said that every request for government help was rebuffed. The government subsequently released a national budget in which there was no additional money targeted for this area.

Michael Field, theage.com.au

VARIETIES OF ASIAN TARO ARE stored at a gene bank at the University of the South Pacific's Regional Crops Gene Bank at its School of Agriculture, Alafua Campus, Samoa. The crop gene bank is a safeguard for future use; should a plant species become extinct, the plants in the gene bank could be multiplied and distributed to farmers, thereby reversing the negative impact of their disappearance. The Regional Crops Gene Bank is an extension of the school's Tissue Culture Laboratory.

USP Beat, Vol. 3 (18.) 2003.

SAMOA

SAMOA WAS HIT BY CYCLONE Heta on the 4th of January. Gusting winds to 105 mph tore roofs from houses, uprooted trees and downed power lines. Five-meter high waves pounded the coastlines. Samoa's international airport closed and all travel between islands was cancelled. Rivers flooded and giant waves surged across coastal roads. After impacting Samoa, cyclone Heta intensified and headed off for tiny Niue, leaving it devastated. The cyclone was described as the worst in living memory by local residents, with winds of 150 miles per hour and gusts up to 184 mph. Cyclone Heta was fast, furious and ruthless, and coastal areas of the island were heavily impacted. The main village of Alofa took the full brunt of the cyclone and families lost everything in the storm. The hospital was destroyed, as well as the hotel and all infrastructure. The coral reefs, important for tourism, are destroyed and it will take years for them to recover. The seriously injured were flown to New Zealand for treatment. Australian High Commissioner in Wellington flew to the island to inspect the damage, and reported that the island was ravaged, leaving islanders little choice but to leave. Many Niueans already have departed, leaving many to wonder whether the island will have critical mass to continue as a self-governing territory.

John Kerin, NEWS.com.au for January 16, 2004.

AOTEAROA

WAIKATO UNIVERSITY Chemistry lecturer Chris Hendy won a fellowship to try to understand why the climate has changed so dramatically. The project is funded by American billionaire, Gary Comer, who is a passionate sailor. The award of \$500,000 is to study climate change that has opened up the Arctic Northwest Passage. Hendy will look at sediment movements in South Island to determine whether change is also happening in the southern hemisphere.

Pacific News Bulletin, September 2003

TUVALU

TUVALU IS PLEADING FOR an exemption to Australia's stringent immigration laws. In Auckland, the Tuvaluan population has doubled, and Tuvaluans are urging authorities to move its entire population of 12,000 to Australia in order to escape an increasingly precarious existence on Tuvalu's coral atolls. Global warming and cyclones threaten to swamp the islands that comprise only 26 square kilometers, and are spread across nine isolated atolls. The highest point is only five meters above sea level.

Pacific News Bulletin, Vol. 18(7), 2003

MARQUESAS ISLANDS

A NEW PETROGLYPH MUSEUM has been inaugurated in Hokatu, Ua Huka, the Marquesas Islands. The village of Hokatu, Ua Huka, opened its doors to a petroglyph museum on Friday, October 17th 2003, thanks to the energetic and charismatic mayor of Ua Huka Island, Leon Lichtle. The small island of Ua Huka, with some 400 inhabitants who live in the three villages of Vaipae'e, Hane, and Hokatu, already has a historic museum (the Community Museum of Ua Huka) in Vaipae'e, a maritime museum in Hane, and now a museum dedicated to petroglyphs in Hokatu.

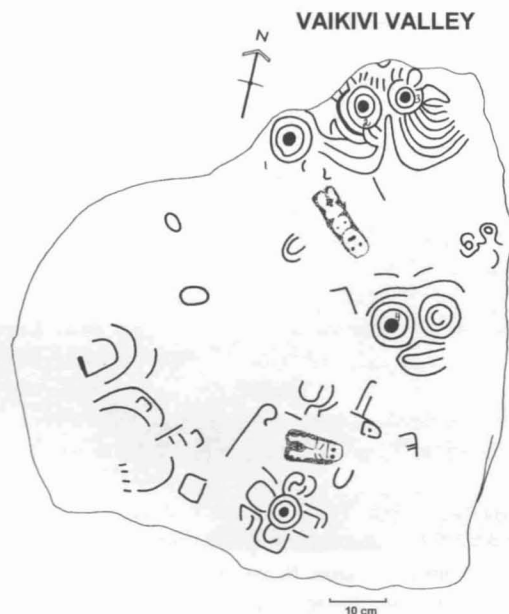


Figure 1. Petroglyphs recorded by Sidsel Millerstrom in Vaikivi Valley, Ua Huka, in 1985.

The occasion was marked by the visit of *Aranui 3*, the freighter/passenger ship that takes a monthly voyage to many valleys in the six presently-inhabited islands in the Marquesas Archipelago. Some 140 passengers, including a Hawaiian group of Lua warriors, witnessed the inauguration along with the local inhabitants. The master carver and the current museum custodian, Joseph Tehau Vaatete, also was present. Vaatete has carved, from photographs, many of the objects collected from the 1920-21 Bishop Museum Expedition. Many of these items are on display in the Community Museum in Vaipae'e. I happened to be the lecturer on board the ship during this voyage. Because I (along with Edmundo Edwards, Heidy Baumgartner-Lesage, Seppi Schmid, and Trudy Millerstrom) spent many weeks recording petroglyph on Ua Huka in 1985, I therefore received the honor of cutting the flower garland, an act that officially opened the museum.

The museum is located in the center of the village, by the beach. It consists of two large rooms filled with carefully made plaster casts of petroglyphs. The castings were made by Francis Olliver, formerly with the Département d'Archéologie du Centre Polynésien des Sciences Humaines (now called the Service de la Culture et du Patrimoine), Tahiti. The majority of the casts, in various colors, were taken from Vaikivi, a sacred site (*me'ae*) with numerous figures of anthropomorphic faces and figures, and geometric motifs (Figure 1).

I commend the Mayor for including petroglyphs as part of the cultural heritage of the Marquesan people.

Sidsel Millerstrom, Ph.D.

HAWAII

THE HAWAIIAN HOMES commission has denied the Bishop Museum permission to enter burial caves in Kawaihae, Hawaii Island, in order to retrieve 83 rare Hawaiian artifacts.

The artifacts, believed to be worth millions, along with skeletal remains, were taken from the caves back in 1905; other removals were as late as 1980. David Forbes, an amateur archaeologist, removed the collection from the cave in 1905. But 95 years later, Hui Malama, took it upon themselves to re-enter the collection, gaining the wrath of several Hawaiian groups who questioned Hui Malama's ability to protect the collection from damage. A review panel for violations of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act concludes that the Bishop Museum "loaned" the artifacts to Hui Malama and this does not constitute proper repatriation. Thus the museum could be liable for any damage to the collection. Museum president, William Y. Brown stated that "neither the museum nor the claimants can be certain that all of the objects were in fact placed in the Kawaihae Cave, nor can we be assured that persons unknown have not removed them." A total of 13 organizations claim ownership of the objects. The museum's request was denied because commission members preferred to leave the relics in the cave out of respect for their ancestors.

Timothy Hurley, Honolulu Advertiser. Sept. 24 2003

HAWAIIANS HAVE FOUGHT HARD to regain control of the small Hawaiian island of Kaho'olawe. Some risked their lives to occupy the island during scheduled live-fire training in the 1970s. Finally, in November 2003, the US Navy officially

transferred control of the island of Kaho'olawe to the state of Hawai'i. The Navy will continue their demobilizing operations for a few months more. The Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission, a state agency, will continue to work on revegetating the island. When the Navy's cleanup began, the island was barren and scarred; scrap metal and old tires littered the red dust and hardpan landscape. Free access was not allowed due to the unexploded ordinance. Although warnings are still in place and the danger of unexploded ordinance still exists, hundreds of volunteers have planted native vegetation, and seeds are sprouting. But it will take many years of work to heal the island's wounds.

Lee Cataluna, Honolulu Advertiser, November 11, 2003.

A VOYAGE TO THE NORTHWESTERN HAWAIIAN Islands by the *Hōkule'a* has been postponed. Just four days before the *Hōkule'a* was set to leave for Kaua'i on the first part of the voyage, the escort boat broke a mast. There was not enough time to repair it or locate a replacement, and the voyage could not be delayed due to weather. The plans were for *Hōkule'a* to sail to each of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands on a thirty-day voyage. The trip has been rescheduled for May 2004. The Northwestern Hawaiian Islands are ecologically fragile, so the crew will only go ashore when it is possible to do without harm to the environment.

Polynesian Voyaging Society, Honolulu. Winter 2003

PITCAIRN

AT THE FIRST COURT SITTING ON Pitcairn in 106 years, charges were laid against seven local men for a variety of sexual offenses alleged to have occurred at least five years ago; a few date back forty years. All pleaded not guilty. The charges are a result of 3½ years of police investigation. Further charges will be made against some Pitcairners who are now living in New Zealand. In July, the prosecution submitted their evidence and the defense challenged the validity of the court. On their way back to New Zealand via Tahiti, the prosecution team was photographed while partying with the magistrate, and wearing red tinsel wigs and fake breasts. The Pitcairners were outraged by the photos, which were published in 54 countries around the world. Pitcairn's mayor, Steve Christian, stated that "...it seems to us a mockery for them to come here and charge the men for sexual abuse". Another issue is of the prosecution team socializing with the magistrate. Auckland crown prosecutor, Simon Moore, apologized for any offense, saying that he did not see anything inappropriate in the prank.

Pitcairn Miscellany 2003

CHILE

IN DECEMBER, THE NEWLY-RENOVATED Rapa Nui exhibits were opened at the Fonck Museum in Viña del Mar. The new exhibits are handsome, well-lit, with new cabinets and labels, many in both Spanish and English. The small statues and figures are well-displayed, several of them obviously very old. One eye-catcher is a wooden *moai* figure about 18 inches tall in a glass case in the main entry hall. It is a beauty, probably dating back to sometime early in the last century. Lighted from above, it is mounted on a rotating table that slowly spins around. The big "WELCOME" sign at the entrance to the ex-

hibit is in six or seven languages including Russian and Japanese!! Featured, of course, is the Fonck's famous tapa cloth cape that now is fully enclosed in a glass case with filtered light from above. As part of the conference activities in Reñaca, Viña del Mar, next September, attendees will be treated to a personal tour of the Fonck Museum.

LONDON

The British Museum has just opened a huge new gallery called "Enlightenment", which is basically what an 18th century Cabinet of Curiosities would have been like, and which contains examples of everything in the museum, and exhibiting most of their best Easter Island wood carvings, including the famous carving of a hand, a *rei miro*, the *kava kavas*, etc. Also included are other Pacific things, such as bark cloth made by Fletcher Christian's widow, etc. Hoa Hakananai'a has been moved from its pedestal in the glass-covered courtyard and is now part of an exhibit called "Living and Dying". In its current location, the statue now has spotlights trained on it from above, so the carvings on the back stand out quite nicely. So anyone wanting to see them at their best should head for the British Museum within the next few months; after that the statue will be back on its pedestal by the sandwich bar, with no special lighting.

Paul G. Bahn

WHAT'S NEW IN HANGA ROA

UNESCO has awarded a German firm, Maar Denkmalpflege GmbH, a contract to preserve the world-famous but decaying *moai* sculptures on Easter Island, which are suffering the effects of the weather, tourism and past restoration attempts. Stefan Maar, founder of Berlin-based firm, said that his company planned to begin treating the statues with chemicals in early 2005 in a project estimated to cost about 10 million euros (6.84 million pounds). "Something has to be done," Maar told Reuters (November 4, 2003). "But with over 1,000 figures, it is a really big undertaking."

Maar's scientists are developing a chemical treatment for the unique volcanic tuff from which the statues are carved. "The stone is not like anything else," Maar said. The *moai* statues are between 400 and 1,000 years old and average 13 ft (4 meters) in height, weighing up to 82 tons. The chemicals should prevent moisture passing through the stone and stabilize it, stopping the growth of large cracks, said Maar, who gained experience in preserving historic monuments on German projects. "After the fall of the Berlin Wall, there was money to research preservation techniques for monuments that the German Democratic Republic had not restored," he said.

Rapa Nui expert Francesco Di Castri, former deputy director of UNESCO and former president of the World Science Institute, agreed that something must be done, pointing out that if the *moai* are destroyed, the island itself will be destroyed because without tourism the island is nothing. Mónica Bahamóndez, technical chief at Chile's National Conservation and Restoration Center, lamented that the Chilean govern-

ment, which has total control over the park where the *moai* stand, has not funded any preservation projects for the monoliths. She would like to see funds focused on "priority statues" that are still worth saving, noting that some are so deteriorated they are beyond help.

The chemical treatment is meant to prevent moisture passing through the porous tuff and to stop the widening of large cracks that are now forming. Hangarua's mayor, Petero Edmunds, said "It's great news. The important thing is to save the *moai*." The German project comes in addition to an ongoing \$600,000 Japanese program to weatherproof some of the statues, including the fifteen well-known *moai* on Tongariki's platform. Some experts are taking a "wait and see" attitude on the German project, remembering broken promises of funds from other sources in the past. And, Francisco Torres, director of the island's archeological museum, noted that, "This type of project is often proposed with a total lack of knowledge about the conservation priorities here."

VETERINARY RELIEF INTERNATIONAL RETURNS

AFTER FIVE YEARS OF PROMOTING improvement of animal welfare on Rapa Nui, I am guardedly optimistic that veterinary standards are gradually advancing and that continued efforts will further enhance the condition of the island's domestic animal populations. Veterinary Relief International's (VRI) most recent trip to Rapa Nui (Dec '03 – Jan '04) allowed continuation of efforts from previous trips and initiation of new and important programs. Over 400 horses and cattle received free deworming and vitamin supplementation. Ranchers were updated on developments in the ongoing investigation of the widespread poisoning of livestock by the introduced plant *cho cho* (*Crotalaria spp.*). The *cho cho* investigation was continued with current efforts directed towards looking for signs of the disease in asymptomatic cattle.



Laura Boyd and camera operator and soundman Eric Burge documenting Jon's efforts on the island. The completed 28-minute film (entitled *Caballo Loco on Easter Island*) will be aired on Montana PBS and will be considered for release by the Science Channel (Discovery Networks). The film will also be distributed to all science and natural history film festivals in the U.S.

Finding subclinical intoxication would be an important indicator that humans might be getting regularly exposed to the plant toxins through beef consumption.

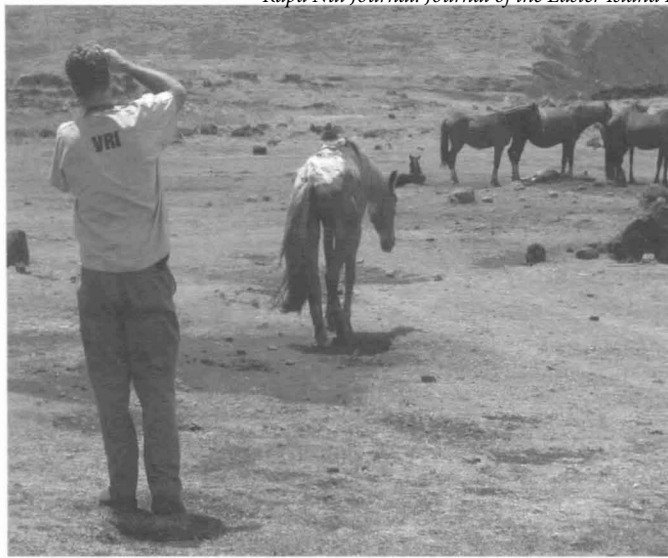
We finally started the Equine Population Control program with contraceptive vaccines administered to 23 mares. It was necessary to start with a small number of mares in order to assess acceptance of the program among Rapanui ranchers. This product directly opposes the common local notion that it is always better to have more animals. So, I am very encouraged that a level of trust has been achieved which resulted in requests for the contraceptive vaccine exceeding availability. Twenty-two stallions were castrated, but more importantly, horse-owners were taught how to safely and effectively perform this simple surgery themselves. Previously, castrations were crudely performed with buck knives or broken glass bottles.



One of the many dogs that roam the island. Jon's work will provide an alternative to the use of poison meat as a means of controlling the dog population.

As always, we answered requests for a wide variety of small animal house calls including vomiting cats, canine allergies, chickens with mange, and much more. An episode of frustrating conflict had an auspicious end when a visiting SAG veterinarian's objection to VRI's work led to widespread affirmation by local animal owners of their support and desire for continuing VRI assistance with veterinary issues. This incident culminated in provision of a document of unanimous written support being drafted for VRI by the Comisión de Desarrollo (including the Governor, local directors of SAG and CONAF, and CONADI). Logistics were organized for spay/neuter clinics which will begin within the year. Hopefully such clinics will eliminate the need for population control of small animals by intentional poisoning. Lastly, we were accompanied by 2 graduate film students from Montana who shot footage of VRI's work on Rapa Nui for a documentary film to be released late in 2004.

The animals of Rapa Nui still experience the same problems which I have described in previous RNJ articles (May 2001, Oct 2003). However, conditions are slowly improving,



Arzt photographs an island horse suffering from the effects of eating a toxic plant known as "cho-cho". The plant contains pyrrolizidine alkaloids, known carcinogens and hepatotoxins (liver toxins). The toxins cause irreversible cirrhosis and alteration to the brain, resulting in progressive staggering, blindness, and jaundice, invariably culminating in coma and death.

and I am largely confident that VRI's work has contributed to that progress. From my first trip to the island, I was immediately aware that altering public perception of animals' needs would be far more challenging than diagnosing diseases or determining inadequacies in husbandry. Each time we go back, I can see that perception of need gradually changing. On this trip I was booked solid every day (including Christmas) and still was not able to get to every ranch on my list. A steady flow of requests at my doorstep reminded me that just 3 years ago it was I that was often asking for the "privilege" to consult on herd health. The Rapanui's recognition that their animals do need help, and that help is now available is what is most encouraging. We are already planning the Dec '04 trip. For more information on veterinary projects on Rapa Nui visit veterinaryreliefinternational.com.

Jonathan Arzt, DVM, MPVM
Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Pathology
Colorado State University

A NEW ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN developed by the Dirección General del Territorio Marítimo, Chile, will study and help control the marine resources around Easter Island, in an internationally protected zone. For the first time, DIRECTEMAR (Dir.Gen.del Terr.Mar) has created the Programa de Observación del Ambiente Litoral (POAL) on Rapa Nui. This action is of great importance because it will work towards the protection of a Southeast Pacific marine area. The program will create a base for studies leading to the protection of ecosystems and natural habitats. Samples of soil and water, which will be taken twice a year, will allow DIRECTMAR to have environmental control over this protected zone, and will analyze such things as the content of heavy metals, nutrients, organic material, etc.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 3 January 2004



Laura Boyd, a graduate student in documentary filmmaking at Montana State University, is shown here with veterinarian Jon Arzt talking to a Rapanui stock owner on Easter Island. Her project was to document Jon's work with the island's animals.

A GRADUATE STUDENT IN ENGINEERING from the Universidad Católica de Valparaíso has developed a project to help repopulate lobsters (*langosta*) at Easter Island. Worried by the scarcity of two endemic species on Rapa Nui, a young engineering student from Easter Island who is studying fisheries, Nancy Rivera Chavez, presented a project to UNESCO to help with the reproduction of the island's lobsters (*Panulirus pascuensis*). She obtained USD 20,000 to rehabilitate installations for raising lobsters that live exclusively around Rapa Nui. The *langosta* are found down to 200 meters depth. There currently is a "veda" – fishing prohibited – between November and March. Also, the little shellfish, *Cypraea caputdraconis*, known as "pure" on the island are now scarce. These are collected by women at low tide and used to make shell necklaces. She started by studying how the mollusks were extracted, their age at capture and their distribution along the coast. "The extraction does not discriminate by size or sexual maturity of the resource", she affirmed. And now, scuba divers are taking them out at a greater rate. Nancy returned to the island in October to await the resources that will allow her to start up the project with the women who collect shells, focusing on the re-population of the Southeast zone of the island, which was over-exploited at the beginning of the 1990s.

El Mercurio de Valparaíso, 8 January 2004

RAPANUI ISLANDER AND SCHOOL TEACHER, Virginia (Viki) Haoa Cardinali, received an award for excellence in teaching on December 30th, 2003. The Premio Gabriela Mistral, an award that recognizes teachers, was given to only 27 Chilean teachers. Viki is noted for her efforts to instruct immersion classes in the Rapanui language. Congratulations to Viki, not only for the honor of the award, but for all her efforts over the years to help keep the Rapanui language alive.

El Mercurio, 31 December 2003.

THE ASSOCIATION OF GUIDES on Easter Island has been working hard to provide knowledgeable, official, and well-trained guides to the archaeological sites of the island. But it is an uphill battle for there is no "official profession" known as "guide" in Chile. Thus there is no law that prohibits someone from just declaring himself as a "guide". On the island, any

taxi driver from the mainland can give tours, however ignorant they may be of the sites and the island's history.

THE AUTONOMY MOVEMENT ON THE ISLAND

EASTER ISLANDERS DO NOT OWN or manage their own island. This lack of control is one of many things that will change if a new plan to give Rapa Nui an autonomous government, while still remaining a part of Chile as it has been for 115 years. Autonomy is a pet project of Chilean President Ricardo Lagos who agreed to heed longstanding Rapanui demands for greater self-rule as part of his wider mission to improve conditions for Chile's native peoples. The proposal to give Rapa Nui control over education, health, and land management while leaving Chile in charge of defense and foreign relations, is expected to go to Chile's Congress in the coming months.

The 3,800 residents of the island, of which 1,800 are native Rapanui, feel like a forgotten annex to Chile. "This is me. This is all of us," said Evelyn Hucke, a performer of traditional Rapa Nui dances, showing a map of the island. "These lands are us and this land should be returned to its legitimate owners. Chile, the colonizer can't keep thinking it owns us and our land." Hucke and a handful of other Rapanui would like to see complete independence for their beloved land. But most admit that Rapa Nui would suffer without the \$10 million a year it receives from the budget of Chile's fifth region, which administers the island. "If Easter Island becomes independent, what we will live on tomorrow?" asks Rogelio Paoa, who works in the tourist industry, the source of \$3 million a year in income for the island.

The autonomy plan is modeled after Tahiti's autonomy under French rule. "This territory is part of Polynesia. We have our own language, system, culture, identity, and climate. Everything here is different, which justifies us having a different administration," said Easter Island Mayor Petero Edmunds, the main promoter of autonomy.

Individual Rapanui own property in the town of Hanga Roa, but with autonomy they would win the right to manage road construction, agricultural use, and tourism development on the public parklands. The island governor, Enrique Pakarati said that Lagos agrees with the findings in a new report that recommends returning property rights to the Rapanui. The Historic Truth and Reconciliation Report was commissioned by the government and details human rights abuses against different indigenous groups in Chile. "The president strongly backs these principles," Pakarati said.

Chile gained sovereignty of Easter Island in 1888 when it annexed the island. In the 1950s the Chilean government appropriated the land on the island as well, violating the original protection agreement. While Chile is now a fairly benevolent ruler, as recently as the 1960s the islanders had major grievances over annexation of land for a national park, suppression of the local language, restrictions on travel, being forced to work without pay and not having voting rights.

The laid-back, dusty streets of Hanga Roa could not be more different from industrious Chile, which is culturally closer to the United States and Europe. A traditional committee of elders still advises the mayor on political decisions.

A small separatist movement, which flies a white flag with a red *reimiro*, wants mainland Chileans to pay a visa fee

to visit and to show a return ticket when they come to Rapa Nui. That is how it works when people from Ecuador visit the Galapagos Islands.

Erity Teave, spokeswoman for the independence group, said islanders were tired of excessive immigration to the island, where nearly half the population is now non-native. Despite voices of resentment, islanders are often pro-Chile. "Tourists ask you, and I always make it clear that we will continue being Chileans," said Victor who, like many Rapa Nui, is a polyglot. He speaks six languages.

Yahoo! News, based on an article by Ignacio Badal, November 20, 2003.

AHU TONGARIKI, FAMED FOR its fifteen standing statues, is undergoing repairs. Rapanui islander, Rafael Rapu, is in charge of the current efforts. All the dirt previously used as fill in the *ahu* platform was removed and replaced with *kikiri* (5-10 cm irregular rocks) and a *paenga* platform was put on top of the *ahu* to stabilize it. As the first 20 meters of the *paenga* wall (from the southwest corner) had no foundation, new foundations were prepared, and a 40 x 40 cm concrete buttress was built all along the interior of the wall. Rapu's team, by pecking along the polished surfaces of the *paenga*, also disguised saw-cuts made during the earlier reconstruction. During the first reconstruction effort, Tongariki's standing *moai* had been placed on top of heavy rocks that were fixed with mortar; these were not in danger of falling. In this most recent project, many artifacts were recovered from the upper dirt fill that had been obtained from Poike. Artifacts found in the dirt fill include *mata'a* and basalt flakes. The rocky fill beneath that included many *poro* that formerly were on the surface of the platform and the wings (*Poro* are naturally rounded beach cobbles found at several places around the island; they were used on many of the *ahu*, either on the platform top or on the "ramp" leading up to the top). Some of the *poro* found in the rubble are as large as those on top of the wings, but many are smaller, suggesting that the original upper platform likely was paved with *poro* as is Ahu Nau Nau at 'Anakena. Two special artifacts were recovered from the rubble left at the side of the road: a broken *moai* head with carved eye sockets and a heavy fine-grained basalt rock with polished oval surfaces. A Japanese team led by Professor Masaaki Sawada (University of Tsukuba, Tokyo) and Monica Bahamondez (Centro Nacional de Conservación y Restauración, Chile) will be working on the conservation of the fifteen *moai* now standing on the *ahu* at Tongariki.

RAPANUI ISLANDER, Rafael Tuki, was picked as the Numero Uno basketball player in the Vth Region (of Chile). He plays for the team called "Villa Alegre" in Viña del Mar.

THERE IS A CONTINUING row between officials on Easter Island and government health authorities on the Chilean mainland over the problem of garbage on Easter Island, particularly the disposal of excess non-degradable garbage on the island. Easter Island is not the only small island with this problem; what to do about the disposal of garbage? Landfills become overrun, and it is too costly to ship it somewhere else. Even if that were possible, where would that "other place" be?

The Santiago Times (30 December 2003)

VARIOUS CONSTRUCTION projects are ongoing on the island, including a new building for Sernatur, on Policarpo Toro, across from Playa Pea. The Ministry of Justice is being rebuilt. The gym is being reconstructed and a new market on Atamu Tekena is nearly finished. The hospital building is undergoing a remodel with new offices and some upgrades, and the new control tower at the airport is up and running. Construction on the school has halted; the ship did not arrive, and they ran out of building materials.

A RAPA NUI MARATHON RACE is scheduled for June. The third annual Easter Island Marathon, half marathon and 10K, is set for 12 June. A Sprint Triathlon will be on 11 June, and a Mountain bike race, 13 June. The event has a cap of 150 entries and is being arranged through Marathon Tours.

AN ITALIAN TOURIST WHO VANDALIZED a statue at the quarry of Rano Raraku was fined US\$ 800 and forbidden to return to the island for a year. However, nothing is being done to protect the *moai* at Vinapu which are being damaged by goats, or to protect archaeological sites that are located within the new *parcelas*. We were told that it is "still the Wild West, and no one will accept controls or regulations".

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- "Step into Liquid", a surf movie was shown recently on the Nickelodeon channel. This is a gorgeous and kicky film that travels all over the world in search of the perfect wave – from Easter Island to the shipping canals of Texas (from the sublime to the ridiculous). Documented by Dana Brown, the son of Bruce 'Endless Summer' Brown, documents the urge to surf with great visuals and stories that surf nuts will relish.
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